"Brothers! Don't damn your souls. Remember God's words: Thou shalt not kill."

The voice came from the far end of the room. The priest was trying to keep the peasants from rushing to Chorino.

WHAT TO DO WITH THEM?

Part of the crowd left the room. An elderly man with a face weathered to the color and texture of leather stepped over me. "Each one in his turn, son," he said. "The people will dispose of all of you, one by one. Now think of your sins."

Eugene opened his eyes and, moving his bruised and swollen lips with effort, asked me, "Will they kill us?"

Before I could answer he blacked out again, and his head fell on my lap. The muzhiks discussed in a matter-of-fact way what to do with us. One thought that the ax blade was as good for us as the butt end. Another insisted we must be burned alive for having burned the church. One stepped over me and grabbed my shoulder. "Look here, you wise guy!" he shouted, holding a silver coin two inches from my eyes. "Why is this a ruble? Because it carries the Tsar's picture. Now, put the mug of a muzhik on it, and the ruble will be worth nothing. All my life I have broken my neck to put aside a few rubles, and here you come to ruin me! Drag their bowels out, brothers!"

It appeared that the ringleaders had gone to Chorino with the priest and that those who remained in the station were to guard us until the others returned. Hope flickered for a moment. A man in an officer's uniform entered the waiting room and strode resolutely through the crowd. The gendarme stood at attention. The officer looked at Eugene and me lying on the floor, covered with blood, and began to bellow, "What goes on here? A murder? In a public place! On railroad property! You will all go to Siberia for this! Gendarme! Deliver these men to my sleigh. I am taking them to the city."

Encouraged by this interference, I got up and helped Eugene to the bench. But the muzhiks had little respect for the officer.

"Take to the city those whom you have caught, mister sheriff!" they shouted. "These men have set five churches on fire. The people have caught them, and it is up to the people to decide what to do with them."

The sheriff tried to argue, but the muzhiks shouted louder and louder and began to push him toward the door. The officer grew frightened. To restore his authority, he declared that he would go to